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DEPARTMENT OF NOTES, REVIEWS, ETC.

It is the purpose, in this department, to present from time to time brief original notes, both of methods of work and of results, by members of the Society. All members are invited to submit such items. In the absence of these there will be given a few brief abstracts of recent work of more general interest to students and teachers. There will be no attempt to make these abstracts exhaustive. They will illustrate progress without attempting to define it, and will thus give to the teacher current illustrations, and to the isolated student suggestions of suitable fields of investigation.—[Editor.]

MITOCHONDRIA IN SPINAL GANGLION CELLS OF VERTEBRATES

Cowdry (Am. Jour. Anat. Nov. 1914) makes report of studies of distribution of mitochondria in the spinal ganglion cells of vertebrates. He presents a tabular summary of the announced results of studies already made. The author considers mitochondria as fundamental constituents of spinal ganglion cells and that they probably play a part in metabolism. He believes that the Nissl substance occurs in living spinal cells as a diffuse, continuous material and not in the form of granules and flakes as we see them. He finds the mitochondria in man, monkey, guinea-pig, white rat, pigeon, snake, turtle, frog, and necturus. In all of these there is a constancy of morphology, distribution, relative amount, and in micro-chemical properties. This constancy is ground for a belief in a common and basal function thruout. There is also a reciprocal relation between the amount of mitochondria and the lipoid granules. The number and size of Nissl bodies gradually increase with the size of the ganglion cells. This is interpreted as due to the difference in precipitation or coagulability of the diffuse substance in the various sizes of cells.

Guilliermond (Rev. Gen. Bot. XXVI, 1914; P. 182) discusses the function and nature of mitochondria in general, based on the various theories that have been proposed. He is disposed to believe that they may have a large rôle in nutrition,—having to do with intussusception and fixation of incoming substance, and with the opposite process of oxidation and organization of secretions as well. He holds that they are distinct organic bodies, originating by the division of pre-existing mitochondria, becoming modified into plastids, chondriomes, and the like.